REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding FINAL Office Action mailed June 2, 2005. The Office Action has responded to Applicants' previous response by largely ignoring Applicants' remarks with respect to the claimed "path." In this regard, the Office Action relies upon the citation of *In re Van Geuns* as an apparent basis for ignoring clear teachings of the specification with respect to claim terms. This is NOT a proper proposition of *In re Van Geuns*. While Applicants' acknowledge that claims are to be given their broadest ***reasonable*** interpretation, clear teachings of the specification cannot be ignored.

With regard to the term "path," the specification defines this term on page 7, lines 13-14, where it states "a rail (or path) 22..." Notwithstanding this clear teaching of the specification, the FINAL Office Action deems it proper to wholly disregard this definition and rely, instead, on the definition provided at www.dictionary.com (and notwithstanding the fact that the definition of www.dictionary.com is repugnant to the teachings of the specification). Rather than belabor this point with the examiner, the Applicants have elected to amend the claims to replace the term "path" with "rail." Using www.dictionary.com as the authoritative source for claim interpretation, the Examiner must now construe this term to mean "a bar extending from one post or support to another and serving as a guard or barrier," which is entirely consistent with the specification. With this proper interpretation of "rail," along with the other consistent amendments made to the claims, the rejections of the Office Action are clearly misplaced and should be withdrawn.

Claim Amendments Do NOT raise new issues

Anticipating that the Examiner may take the position that the amendments raise new issues and therefore refuse to enter the claim amendments, Applicants note that the amendments merely clarify the claim interpretation that was argued in Applicants' previous response. Although the FINAL Office Action did not accept this argument (by substituting another definition for the term path), the Applicants' argument should have at least been fully considered. Therefore, the present amendments merely confirm the positions taken in Applicants' previous response, so the amendments should not be construed as raising new issues for consideration. Consequently, the above amendments should be entered.

The Office Action rejected claims 1- 6, 10, 13 – 15, 19 and 22 under 35 U.S.C 102 as allegedly anticipated by *Bonora*. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. In fact, Applicants submit that rejections are moot in view of the amendments to the independent claims. In this regard, Applicants have amended the independent claim 1 to specify that the load port transfer device includes a "rail" having vertical and horizontal portions, and that the load port transfer device further comprises "a robot disposed to move along both the vertical and horizontal portions of the rail..." Similar limitations have been added to the other independent claims. As amended, the independent claim clearly define over *Bonora*.

As Applicants described in a previous response, unlike that the robot of Applicants' claims (which is movably disposed on the rail). the lift/elevator system (60) of *Bonora* is positioned under the conveyor system (14) (see, c.g., col. 7 lines 36-39). Additionally, *Bonora's* elevator system does not move along the path (72), as shown in Figs. 5 and 8 of the present

application, and specifically recited in the claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims patentably define over *Bonora*. Applicants also note that the lift/elevator system (60) of *Bonora* can be a hoist-type lift system, as described at col. 7 lines 43-45, which is the conventional lifting mechanism disclosed as prior art in the present application.

With respect to claim 1, claim 1 (as amended) recites:

> 1. A load port transfer device, for delivering a wafer carrier along an overhead conveying system, including:
> a load port;
> a ***transport rail, having vertical and horizontal portions*** components, the vertical component portion having a top portion connected to the horizontal portion component beside the overhead conveying system and a bottom portion extending from the load port; and
> ***a robot disposed to move along both the vertical and horizontal portions of the rail, movably to transfer the wafer carrier between the load port and the overhead conveying system.***

(*Emphasis Added*).

Applicants respectfully fails to properly anticipate amended claim 1. In particular, Applicant respectfully asserts that that cited art does not teach or otherwise disclose at least the limitations emphasized above in claim 1. Specifically, the load port transfer device (20) of claim 1 defines a load port (21), a transport rail (22), and a robot (23). The rail (22) is defincd to have both vertical and horizontal portions (221, 222), such as shown in Fig. 4. The vertical portion (221) has a top portion (40) connected to the horizontal portion (222) beside the overhead conveying system (26) and a bottom portion (41) extending from the load port (21). The robot (23) is disposed to move on both the horizontal and vertical portion of the transport rail (22) to transfer the wafer carrier (25) between the load port (21) and the overhead conveying system (26).

Simply stated, these features of claim 1 (as amended), clearly define over the relevant teachings of *Bonora*. Therefore Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Since claims 2 - 6 and 10 are dependent claims that incorporate the limitations of claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other limitations that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

Independent claims 13, 22, and 23 recite similar features, which patently define over *Bonora* for at least the same reasons. The remaining claims are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from an allowable independent claim.

Cited Art of Record

The cited art of record has been considered, but is not believed to affect the patentability of the presently pending claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this Amendment and Response. If, however, any fee is believed to be due, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

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